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(Original Signature of Member)

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. _____

To direct the Secretary of State to establish a fellowship program for regional democracy and rule of law activities in Central America.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mrs. TORRES of California introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of State to establish a fellowship program for regional democracy and rule of law activities in Central America.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Central American Net-
5 work for Democracy Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF STATE FELLOWSHIPS FOR RE-**
2 **GIONAL DEMOCRACY AND RULE OF LAW AC-**
3 **TIVITIES IN CENTRAL AMERICA.**

4 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of State shall
5 establish a fellowship program, to be known as the “Cen-
6 tral American Network for Democracy”, to support a re-
7 gional corps of civil society activists, lawyers (including
8 members of the judiciary and prosecutors’ offices), jour-
9 nalists, and investigators for regional democracy and rule
10 of law activities in Central America.

11 (b) ELEMENTS.—The fellowship program required by
12 subsection (a) shall—

13 (1) provide a temporary respite for members of
14 the regional corps in a safe environment;

15 (2) allow members of the regional corps to con-
16 tinue to work through engagement with universities,
17 think tanks, government actors, and international
18 organizations; and

19 (3) assist members of the regional corps in
20 leveraging lessons learned in order to contribute to
21 regional democracy and rule of law activities in Cen-
22 tral America, including electoral and transition sup-
23 port, institutional reform, anti-corruption investiga-
24 tions, and local engagement.

1 (c) REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT.—The
2 Secretary of State shall take such steps as may be nec-
3 essary—

4 (1) to obtain support for the fellowship program
5 required by subsection (a) from international foun-
6 dations, regional and United States governmental
7 and nongovernmental organizations, and regional
8 and United States universities; and

9 (2) to ensure the fellowship program is well co-
10 ordinated with and complementary of existing mech-
11 anisms, such as the Lifeline Embattled CSO Assist-
12 ance Fund.

13 (d) FOCUS; SAFETY.—Activities carried out under
14 the fellowship program required by subsection (a)—

15 (1) should focus on coordination and consulta-
16 tion with key agencies and international bodies to
17 continue their democracy efforts, including the De-
18 partment of State, the United States Agency for
19 International Development, the Department of Jus-
20 tice, the Department of the Treasury, the Organiza-
21 tion of American States, the Inter-American Court
22 for Human Rights, and the United Nations; and

23 (2) may include strengthened protection for the
24 physical safety of individuals who must leave their
25 home country to participate in the program, includ-

1 ing assistance for temporary relocation, English lan-
2 guage learning, and mental health support.

3 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
4 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
5 \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2023.